

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-26 were rejected to by the Examiner. By this Reply and Amendment, claims 2, 12, 18 and 23 have been amended, and claims 1-26 remain pending in the present application. All claim amendments are fully supported throughout the written description and figures of the specification (see, for example, paragraphs 0015, 0016, 0021 and 0022).

The abstract was objected to as having implied and unnecessary language. Accordingly, the abstract has been amended, and a Replacement Sheet has been attached at the end of this paper.

Claim 2 was objected to for using an acronym. Accordingly, claim 2 has been amended to replace the acronym "MEMS" with "micro-electro-mechanical systems" and the objection is believed to be overcome.

Claims 1, 4-10, 12-16, 18-21, 23, 25 and 26 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by the Willauer reference, US Patent No.: 6,540,019. At least certain aspects of this rejection are traversed, however independent claims 12, 18 and 23 have been amended to clarify certain aspects of the claim language and to facilitate allowance of the present application.

The Willauer reference describes a bridge plug with downhole instrumentation. For example, a sensor module 30 is added to a conventional tool (See column 2, lines 45-52) and comprises a transmitter 52, an electrical control module with signal receiver 60, and a battery pack 58 connected to module 60. One or more modules 60 are connected to pressure transducers 62 and 64 which monitor pressure in different locations. The pressure transducer 62 cooperates with a pressure pathway 70 open to annulus pressure, and pressure transducer 64 is "plumbed" to sense pressure within the expendable bridge plug element via an extended pathway 66. (See column 3, lines 17-46). The Willauer reference does not disclose or suggest a sensor positioned within a packer or the combined measurement and verification of well parameters, as recited in the pending independent claims.

With specific reference to the pending claims, the Willauer reference fails to disclose or suggest numerous elements of the rejected independent claims. Examples of elements not disclosed or suggested by the cited reference are provided for each of the rejected independent claims as follows:

Claim 1: a packer comprising a "sensor positioned therein";

Claim 12: a packer having a setting chamber with a pressure gauge to measure pressure within the setting chamber combined with "a pressure sensor to measure a pressure of the hydraulic fluid, supplied by the remote source, at a location remote from the setting chamber, wherein the the pressure within the setting chamber is compared with the pressure at the location remote from the setting chamber to determine whether the hydraulic fluid is reaching the setting chamber";

Claim 18: a gauge communicating with an interior cavity of the packer and "a redundant gauge to verify measurements of the gauge by sensing the same well characteristic at a location spaced from a measurement location of the gauge"; and

Claim 23: positioning a plurality of gauges within a packer, measuring well characteristics at different positions, and "verifying at least one measured well characteristic by sensing the same measured well characteristic at a spaced measurement location".

The independent claim elements cited above are examples of elements not disclosed or suggested by the Willauer reference. Accordingly, currently pending independent claims 1, 12, 18 and 23 are patentable over the Willauer reference.

Claims 4-10, 13-16, 20, 21, 25 and 26 ultimately depend from one of the independent claims discussed above and are patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to the independent claims as well as for the unique subject matter found in these dependent claims. Accordingly, claims 1, 4-10, 12-16, 18-21, 23, 25 and 26 are patentably distinguishable over the cited reference.

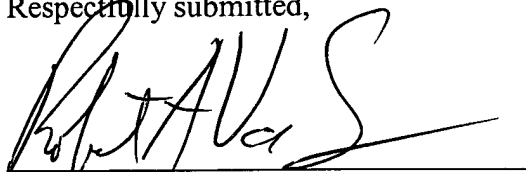
Claims 11, 17, 22 and 24 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Willauer reference in view of the Delatorre et al. reference, US Patent No. 5,554,804. Claims 11, 17, 22 and 24 ultimately depend from independent claims 1, 12, 18 and 23, respectively. The dependent claims are patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to the corresponding independent claims as well as for the unique subject matter added by these dependent claims. The Delatorre et al reference provides no further disclosure that would obviate the deficiencies of disclosure in the Willauer reference as discussed above with respect to the independent claims.

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Willauer reference in view of the Alft et al. reference, US Patent No. 6,577,954. Claim 2 depends from independent claim 1 and is patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to independent claim 1 as well as for the unique subject matter added in claim 2. The Alft et al. reference provides no further disclosure that would obviate the deficiencies of disclosure in the Willauer reference as discussed above with respect to independent claim 1.

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over the Willauer reference in view of the Stephenson reference, US Publication No. US 2002/0163639. Claim 3 depends from independent claim 1 and is patentable for the reasons provided above with respect to independent claim 1 as well as for the unique subject matter added in claim 3. The Stephenson reference provides no further disclosure that would obviate the deficiencies of disclosure in the Willauer reference as discussed above with respect to independent claim 1.

In view of the foregoing remarks, all pending claims are believed patentable over the cited references. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert A. Van Someren', written over a horizontal line.

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Date: March 8, 2006

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